

TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN AND PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 10, 2003*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, on May 20, the people of Taiwan celebrated the third anniversary of the ascent of Chen Shui-bian to the Presidency of Taiwan. In recognition of this anniversary, I would like to congratulate both the people of Taiwan and President Chen upon the achievement of this third anniversary and make a few observations with regard to this auspicious occasion, as well as the long-standing friendship that exists between the United States and Taiwan.

With regard to President Chen, I can only say that in his three years as leader of Taiwan have been exemplary. President Chen has, continues and shall hopefully continue to receive widespread praise around the world for his determined commitment and unswerving dedication to continued democratization, economic reform and basic recognition of human rights.

In his conduct and comments toward the People's Republic of China, President Chen has promised that Taiwan would not seek independence as long as the People's Republic would refrain from using force against Taiwan. Moreover, he has initiated solid measures that are aimed at reducing tensions in the Taiwan Straits so that the freedom of navigation in the Straits can be maintained.

President Chen has further demonstrated his leadership in bringing his diplomatic skills to the fore in gaining Taiwan entrance to the World Trade Organization. In this regard, I can only hope and wish for President Chen's continued diplomatic success in making Taiwan more present in the global community of nations. Two such measures of continued success would rest in gaining Taiwan access and entry to both the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Mr. Speaker, as President Chen celebrates the third anniversary of his Presidency, I would only say that America congratulates and salutes him upon the many successes and achievements of his administration to date. And, that we wish him continued and further success in the future.

A TRIBUTE TO RITA DAVE

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 10, 2003*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Rita Dave in recognition of her dedication to improving the human rights in her community and throughout the world, especially among immigrant populations.

Rita immigrated to the United States with her parents when she was 7 years old. Pursuing her goal to become a lawyer, she received her Juris Doctor Degree from New York Law School, and was admitted to practice in the State of New York in 1992.

Throughout her personal and professional life, Rita has been deeply affected by the

plight of immigrants in the United States. In addition to representing mortgage lenders in her current practice, she works extensively on pro bono projects involving immigrant issues. She has worked together with local and national human rights organizations to organize and mobilize grass roots activities opposing indefinite detention and incarceration of legal permanent residents. She has provided pro bono assistance to detainees across the United States by providing them with legal case law, advising them of their rights under immigration law, and providing assistance and support to their families.

Rita has also worked hard to bring to the attention of elected officials human and civil rights violations suffered by men and women during their detention. She works to expose and remedy these violations to ensure that our legal system remains fair and just. In recognition of her tenacity and empathy for the plight of immigrants, in 2003 she was appointed chairperson of the political action committee for the Federation of Indian Americans.

On the civil rights end, Ms. Dave has founded a non-profit organization devoted to helping men and women who are factually innocent of the crime for which they have been convicted and incarcerated. The group is called The Falsely Accused and Convicted Taking Steps, FACTS. FACTS reviews the case files of individuals who assert their factual innocence then assist them in overturning their convictions.

Rita lives with her husband and 9-year-old daughter in Mineola, NY.

Mr. Speaker, Rita Dave is committed to improving the lives of those in need and those who have suffered human and civil rights violations. As such, she is more than worthy of receiving our recognition today and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable person.

TRIBUTE TO SYLVIA PORTILLO

**HON. JAMES P. MORAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 10, 2003*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an incredible woman from my district who recently received a Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program award. Sylvia Portillo earned this prestigious award through her hard work in expanding health care for the Latino community of northern Virginia.

Sylvia Portillo overcame adversity as a Spanish-speaking immigrant and low-wage worker to become a major health leader in her community. Her career in health care began in El Salvador where she worked as a nurse. Upon fleeing war-torn El Salvador, Sylvia became a home health care companion in Arlington County, to support the three children she left with relatives back home as well as her new family in the United States.

Ms. Portillo was inspired to become a health care advocate for Latinos and other underserved community residents after her experience and the roadblocks she encountered when she tried to get health care and insurance for her two youngest children. In 1996 she joined the Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee as a volunteer in the Women's

Leadership Group. There she organized the Latino community's first health fair by bringing together neighbors, doctors, local groups and city officials. In its seventh year, the fair is the only source of health care for many residents. In 1997, Sylvia became lead organizer for the committee's Health Project with a goal of increasing health access for Alexandria's Latino community. Since then, she has recruited and trained more than 80 health promoters to educate the community about preventive health practices.

Ms. Portillo has also led a campaign that won \$300,000 in medical debt relief from the leading area health system and persuaded local hospitals to hire bilingual staff. The project also has completed three landmark studies documenting conditions of Latino immigrants, including occupational health problems and the consequences of medical debt.

One of the most impressive testimonies about the work Sylvia has accomplished came from a woman who sought her help with a medical debt she could not pay since she was unable to work. Sylvia helped her understand our health system, despite her inability to read. "By working with Silvia, I am no longer afraid," the woman said.

Sylvia and the Health Project have helped countless people throughout my congressional district and northern Virginia. I am proud to have Sylvia in my district, and I look forward to seeing what else she can accomplish in ensuring that her friends and neighbors receive the health care they deserve.

HONORING THE THORNTON SISTERS FOUNDATION

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 10, 2003*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge once again a group of talented and capable women. This month marks the 12th anniversary of the Thornton Sisters Foundation, Inc. I have been following these women's struggles and accomplishments for a long time now, and after a decade of success, I still feel it is an honor to formally salute these women for a third time.

On Sunday, June 8, 2003, the Thornton Sisters Foundation will hold an awards ceremony for the 25 finalists of the Donald and Itasker Thornton Memorial Scholarship and their family members. The occasion will be hosted at Jumping Brook Country Club in Neptune, NJ.

The Thornton Sisters have an inspiring history that led to the creation of this foundation. They come from a family that has always known the intrinsic worth of a good education. In 1948, their parents, Donald and Itasker, moved the family from Harlem, New York City to Long Branch, NJ, so that their children would be able to receive a better education. And while Mrs. Thornton was unable to attend college, she pushed all of her daughters to accomplish something that she would never be able to do.

With the help of scholarships and their parent's inspiration, all six daughters graduated from Monmouth University in Long Branch. Having learned early on the importance of an education, these six sisters now want to give the same opportunity they had to other young women.